

Wilson Supports DTV Transition Delay
Bill now on its way to President Obama

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Today, Congressman Charlie Wilson (OH-6) voted with a majority in the House to pass the “DTV Delay Act.” The bill postpones the date of the analog-to-digital television transition from February 17, 2009, to June 12, 2009.

The purpose of the bill is to provide more time to get coupons for the digital TV converter boxes to the millions of American households that are still on the waiting list.

The government Coupon Program was designed to help households with analog televisions--not connected to cable, satellite or other pay TV service--to buy a converter box so their TV works when full-power TV broadcasters transition from analog to 100 percent digital broadcasts. However, that program ran out of money in early January.

“There are almost 4,000 households in my district alone waiting for the DTV coupons. We can’t transition in two weeks,” Wilson said. “A responsible delay just makes good sense.”

Without a delay, millions of Americans could see their televisions “go dark” in February.

Among its several provisions, the bill:

- Delays the transition by 115 days and extends the license terms of the commercial and public safety entities that will use the DTV spectrum after the transition by a corresponding number of days.
- Permits consumers who never redeemed coupons to apply for replacement coupons, while ensuring that no household can redeem more than two coupons.
- Preserves broadcasters’ ability to transition before the new transition date, if such a move does not interfere with another broadcast signal. The Act makes clear that the existing FCC rules and regulations concerning interference and consumer education will continue to apply.
- Preserves the ability of public safety entities to use the DTV spectrum before the new transition date, subject to existing FCC rules.

The bill now heads to President Obama for his signature.